

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 08801 01 OF 02 311757Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----025574 311800Z /41  
R 311742Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5560  
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 08801

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PEPR, AR, US  
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: A. MADRID 8517, B. STATE 190964

1. BELGRADE CONFERENCE. DURING MEETING AS SCHEDULED, ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER MONTES SAID HE HAD ASKED TO SEE ME TO TELL ME WHY HE HAD DECIDED TO ATTEND NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE AT BELGRADE AND WHAT HE THOUGHT WERE THE RESULTS OF HIS ATTENDANCE. MONTES SAID ARGENTINA HAD DECIDED THAT IT SHOULD NOT ALLOW THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT TO BE DISTORTED FROM ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSES THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF A FEW DETERMINED PRO-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. HE THOUGHT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THOSE WHO TRULY BELIEVE IN NON-ALIGNMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN ORDER TO COUNTER THE EFFORTS OF THE FAR LEFT WHICH HAD ATTEMPTED, AND TO A CERTAIN EXTENT SUCCEEDED, IN DOMINATING NON-ALIGNED MEETINGS. MONTES SAID THROUGH CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA, ARGENTINA, INDONESIA, INDIA AND A FEW OTHER COUNTRIES, THEY WERE ABLE TO DEFEAT THE EFFORTS OF THE FAR LEFT AND TO KEEP THE ORGANIZATION TRUE TO ITS PURPOSES.

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2. HE NOTED FOR EXAMPLE, THAT EFFORTS MADE BY CUBA TO HAVE CRITICAL RESOLUTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC, TO FRENCH ACTIONS IN AFRICA AND TO PUERTO RICO, DID NOT SUCCEED.

3. HE SAID IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD THERE WAS ALSO GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THERE OUGHT TO BE MORE MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

AMONG THE LESSER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. THERE WERE ALSO SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO TRY TO BRING THE MORE DEVELOPED AND LESSER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES CLOSER TOGETHER. THE UNRESOLVED QUESTION WAS WHICH FORUM SHOULD NOW BE USED TO CONSIDER THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE IN A MANNER WHICH WOULD LEAD TO COOPERATION AND POSITIVE STEPS RATHER THAN FURTHER CONFRONTATION.

4. I THANKED MONTES FOR INFORMATION AND EXPRESSED PERSONAL PLEASURE THAT ARGENTINA HAD PARTICIPATED SO VIGOROUSLY AND SO SUCCESSFULLY. IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THE PRINCIPLES WHICH ARGENTINA HAD DEFENDED WERE IN THE INTEREST OF BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WHICH WE ALL SEEK.

5. U.S.-ARGENTINA RELATIONS. I EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES DID NOT SEEM TO BE IMPROVING AS QUICKLY AS I HAD HOPED. THIS WAS CRITICAL IN VIEW OF THE SEPTEMBER 30 CUT-OFF DATE FOR U.S. ARMS TRANSFERS TO ARGENTINA UNLESS THERE WERE MARKED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES PRIOR TO THAT TIME. I WONDERED WHAT PROSPECTS HE SAW FOR THE KINDS OF CHANGES THAT WOULD PERMIT US TO DEVELOP THE BETTER RELATIONS WHICH WE SEEK.

6. MONTES SAID ARGENTINA ALSO DESIRES BETTER RELATIONS  
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WITH THE U.S. BUT NOT ON THE BASIS OF HIS COUNTRY BEING DICTATED TO OR TREATED IN A PATERNALISTIC MANNER BY THE U.S. HE FELT THAT ARGENTINA HAD ALREADY MADE MARKED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SITUATION AND WAS CONTINUING TO DO SO AT A PACE AND IN A MANNER POSSIBLE FOR ARGENTINA. HOWEVER, HE WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT NOTHING WOULD REALLY SATISFY THE U.S. SHORT OF HOLDING ELECTIONS IN ARGENTINA NOW. GIVEN ARGENTINA'S PAST EXPERIENCE AND ITS AWARENESS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION THIS WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION.

7. MONTES SAID THAT IN VIEW OF ARGENTINE ESTIMATE OF THE U.S. ATTITUDE AND IN PURSUIT OF ARGENTINE NATIONAL INTEREST, THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING BASIC CHANGES IN THE ORIENTATION OF ITS FOREIGN RELATIONS. ARGENTINA PROBABLY WOULD LOOK MORE TO COUNTRIES LIKE WEST GERMANY AND JAPAN FOR TECHNOLOGY AND FOR COOPERATION IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL MATTERS. IN THE ECONOMIC AREA IT WOULD PROBABLY STRENGTHEN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND WITH CHINA. HE SAID THAT LAST YEAR ARGENTINA HAD ENJOYED A DOLLARS 400 MILLION TRADE SURPLUS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND A DOLLARS 350 MILLION

DEFICIT WITH THE U.S. THIS MEANT IT HAD USED ITS EARNINGS FROM THE SOVIET UNION TO PAY FOR ITS PURCHASES FROM THE U.S. THAT WAS ACCEPTABLE TO ARGENTINA AS LONG AS OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR RELATIONS PROCEEDED NORMALLY. HOWEVER, ARGENTINA WILL NOW RETHINK ALL ASPECTS OF ITS ECONOMIC RELATIONS, ESPECIALLY SINCE THERE ARE PROSPECTS FOR A DOLLARS 600 MILLION TRADE SURPLUS WITH THE SOVIET UNION FOR THE CURRENT YEAR. ALSO, BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH THE CHINESE, ARGENTINA EXPECTED TO BE ABLE

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TO DEVELOP TRADE RELATIONS THAT WOULD PRODUCE A SURPLUS SIMILAR TO THAT WITH THE SOVIET UNION. ARGENTINA WOULD THEREFORE PLACE GREATER EMPHASIS ON ITS RELATIONS WITH THOSE TWO COUNTRIES. HE SAID THIS DID NOT IMPLY ANY CHANGE REGARDING OUR SHARED IDEALS OR ARGENTINE DESIRE FOR THE BEST POSSIBLE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. IT DID MEAN THAT ARGENTINA WOULD PROCEED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS OWN INTEREST.

8. I THANKED MONTES FOR SPEAKING SO CLEARLY, FULLY AND FRANKLY AS USUAL AND ASSURED HIM THAT THE U.S. FULLY EXPECTED EACH COUNTRY TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHAT IT PERCEIVED TO BE ITS OWN INTEREST. I HAD NO DOUBT THAT THE PACE OF CHANGE WOULD BE WHAT THE COUNTRY THOUGHT POSSIBLE WITHOUT RENDING THE FABRIC OF THE SOCIETY. I FELT IT IMPORTANT HOWEVER TO CLARIFY A BASIC MISAPPREHENSION HE HAD MENTIONED. I KNEW OF NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE U.S. EXPECTED ELECTIONS TO BE HELD IN ARGENTINA IMMEDIATELY ALTHOUGH, OF COURSE, GIVEN OUR BELIEF IN DEMOCRACY, IT WAS OUR HOPE TO SEE ELECTIONS IN EVERY COUNTRY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. I STRESSED THAT

OUR CONCERNS FOCUS VERY SPECIFICALLY ON CERTAIN HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED WITH ARGENTINE OFFICIALS, INCLUDING A VISIT BY THE IAHRG; THE RELEASE, CONFIDENTIAL

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TRIAL OR RIGHT OF OPTION FOR PRISONERS; AND THE ACCOUNTING TO FAMILIES ABOUT THE FATE OF THE DISAPPEARED. THESE WERE THE MATTERS THAT CONCERNED US AND THAT PREVENTED IMPROVEMENT IN OUR RELATIONS.

9. MONTES SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO HEAR MY REMARKS ABOUT ELECTIONS. HE ASSURED ME THAT THE ARGENTINIAN GOVERNMENT ALSO DESIRED TO HAVE EARLY ELECTIONS, BUT WOULD NOT DO SO UNTIL CONDITIONS PROVIDED REASONABLE EXPECTATION THAT AN ELECTED GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT THEN HAVE TO BE REPLACED SHORTLY BY ANOTHER MILITARY INTERVENTION AND THE INSTABILITY WHICH ARGENTINA HAD SUFFERED FOR SO LONG.

10. MONTES SAID HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT WERE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES I HAD MENTIONED. IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE EVER TO ACCOUNT FOR ALL OF THE DISAPPEARED SINCE THERE IS NO WAY OF TELLING WHEN OR BY WHOM SOME HAD BEEN KILLED OR HOW MANY OF THEM HAD JUST RUN AWAY FOR THEIR OWN REASONS. HE THOUGHT A LEGAL SOLUTION MIGHT HAVE TO BE FOUND SO THAT FAMILY MEMBERS WOULD BE ABLE TO PROCEED WITH MATTERS PENDING BECAUSE OF THE UNCERTAIN FATE OF FAMILY MEMBERS. HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN MOVING ON THE PRISONER ISSUE AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO, BUT ACTION COULD NOT BE COMPLETED OVERNIGHT. WITH REGARD TO THE IAHRG, HE SAID ARGENTINA HAD ISSUED AN INVITATION UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS AND HAD RECEIVED A RESPONSE FROM THE COMMISSION INDICATING THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH IT WOULD BE WILLING TO COME. HE HAD THIS RESPONSE UNDER STUDY AND WOULD REPLY IN DUE COURSE IN AN EFFORT TO WORK OUT AN ARRANGEMENT SATISFACTORY TO BOTH SIDES.

11. I EXPRESSED THE HOPE FOR EARLY PROGRESS ON THESE CONFIDENTIAL

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ISSUES SO THAT STEPS COULD BE TAKEN TO BEGIN RESTORING THE TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP WHICH HAD EXISTED FOR SO LONG BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

12. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, MONTES SAID THAT BEGINNING OCTOBER 1 THERE WOULD

IN FACT BE A FOUR-MAN JUNTA RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY AND DEFENSE OF THE COUNTRY. PRESIDENT VIDELA WOULD NOW BE RESPONSIBLE ONLY FOR EXECUTIVE MATTERS AND WOULD TURN OVER THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF RESPONSIBILITY TO GENERAL VIOLA. HE EXPECTED THAT BY NOVEMBER THERE WOULD BE A NUMBER OF CHANGES IN THE GOVERNMENT WITH MANY MORE CIVILIANS BEING BROUGHT INTO CABINET POSITIONS WITH CLEARLY DEFINED DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE INTERESTED IN MOVING TOWARDS GREATER CIVILIAN PARTICIPATION LEADING TO AN ELECTIVE GOVERNMENT AS SOON AS THE CIRCUMSTANCES PERMITTED.

13. THE CONVERSATION, WHICH WAS CARRIED OUT IN THE PRESENCE OF ONLY THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR TO SPAIN, WAS FRIENDLY, OPEN AND PLEASANT THROUGHOUT. MONTES SEEMED TO BELIEVE AND ACCEPT THAT THERE WAS LITTLE PROSPECT FOR MAJOR IMPROVEMENT WITH THE U.S. IN THE SHORT TERM AND APPEARED RECONCILED TO SEEING HIS GOVERNMENT GO DOWN A DIFFERENT COURSE, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING.  
TODMAN

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